

TABLE 1
NEST COUNTS IN ARBITRARILY DEMARCATED AREAS

Area	No. of nests	No. of eggs
6.5 x 20m	352	56
4 x 3 m	55	1
3 x 3.3 m	27	1
4 x 4 m	108	3
13.2 x 20 m	450	128
5 x 15m	186	36
16 x 16 m	436	208
5 x 8.2 m	207	58
Total	1821	491

counts, particularly of the nests, I paid a second visit to the flamingo colony on 30 January 1991. This time an attempt was made to take a sample count of the nests covering approximately one-sixth of the area of the colony. The area was roughly divided into sections, as shown in Table 1.

I did not take a count of chicks, for there were just a few in the nest, and those which could walk herded together and moved too far away, making it impossible to count them.

March 13, 1991.

NAVIN N. BAPAT

6. BRAHMINY KITE *HALIASTUR INDUS* (BODDAERT) PREYING ON BATS

The brahminy kite *Haliastur indus* is mostly regarded as a scavenger, feeding chiefly on dead or dying fish. Its diet is reported to include crabs, frogs, small lizards, snakes, young or sickly birds, insects (mainly termites and grasshoppers) and mice. An attack on a hare is mentioned in HAND BOOK OF THE BIRDS OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN, Ali S. and Ripley, S.D. 1983.

We recorded a case of brahminy kite preying on bats at Vedaranyam, 11 km from the Point Calimere Wildlife and Bird Sanctuary in Tanjore district, Tamil Nadu. At Vedaranyam, an old dilapidated structure housing a chariot of the Vedaranyeshwar temple, harbours a huge colony of insectivorous bats. After sunset, there is a stream of bats flying out of the building. On 14 August 1990, we noticed a brahminy

kite making circles and trying to catch bats without success. During our second visit a few days later, a brahminy kite was again unsuccessfully attempting to catch bats. At the same time we saw a shikra or sparrow hawk (?) (*Accipiter* sp.) catch a bat. On our third visit on 24 August 1990 we saw two brahminy kites hunting for bats, of which one was successful. On capture, it pecked at the shrieking victim to kill it and then flew to feed on a nearby coconut tree. These observations show that the brahminy kite is also an active predator of fast moving prey, and bats form part of its diet.

January 7, 1991

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7. SURGERY OF A RARE KIND

On 11 March 1990 two young Bonelli's eagles *Hieraaetus fasciatus* were found at Galavde wadi near Indapur, Maharashtra. One of them had a fracture on its left leg. Most probably this could have been due to the injury sustained by the bird when their nest was destroyed by local people. X-rays were taken and it was found that the tibiotarsus was fractured and there was one centimetre of overriding. If only plaster was used the eagle would have been left with a shortened and weak leg. As eagles kill their prey with their talons and strong legs are necessary it was decided to operate on the eagle's leg. The eagle was operated under local anaesthesia as this was

found to be the safest. A lateral approach was taken and the bones were reduced and fixed with a plate and four screws. An intra medullary rod was put as an additional support. The screws and plate used were made of special American steel which does not react and is used in human finger operations.

It was noted that the tibiotarsus of the leg bones of a bird has a thin cortex. This is because the bones should be light in weight to facilitate flight. The medullary cavity is very broad. The bone is flat anterioposteriorly.

The muscles of the leg are extremely strong and are grouped in anterior and posterior groups to enable